



Mission - Love God and Neighbor, Build Community - - No Limits

Church Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 27th, 2026

Meeting Place: In Person FLC Room 852

1. Call to Order

The Church Council of Mandarin United Methodist Church convened for its first meeting of 2026. The meeting was called to order by Mike Overton, Chairperson @6:30 p.m.

2. Opening Devotion and Prayer

A devotion and prayer were offered, focusing on the spiritual discipline of **silence**, drawing from *Awakened Grace* and Ecclesiastes 3.

3. Welcome and Orientation

New Church Council members were welcomed. A brief orientation (“Church Council 101”) was provided, reviewing the role of Church Council as the administrative and vision-setting body of the church, responsible for ministry alignment, mission, and oversight in accordance with United Methodist polity.

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the **December 2, 2025 Church Council meeting** were presented for approval.

Motion: To approve the minutes as presented.

Action: Approved without correction.

5. Staff Parish Relations Committee (Linda Hurley)

- Angie and Paula were affirmed as **Summer Camp Directors** for 2026.
 - A new **Music Director** has been hired and is scheduled to begin in March following a comprehensive interview and choir discernment process.
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6. Board of Trustees Report (Rich Clark)

The Board of Trustees reported on recent facility maintenance and improvements, including:

- HVAC maintenance and repairs
- Irrigation system repairs
- Security enhancements
- Accessibility improvements

Ongoing concerns were noted regarding aging HVAC systems, lighting upgrades, and long-term capital improvement needs.

7. Generosity (Jennifer Holmes)

Final 2026 pledge results were reported:

- **179 pledge cards received**
- **Total pledged: \$991,730**
 - \$788,690 designated for Mandarin United Methodist Church
 - \$204,240 designated for Longleaf

Year-end giving exceeded expectations and significantly reduced the 2025 budget deficit.

8. Finance Report (Alex O'Connor)

The proposed **2026 operating budget** was presented with the goal of achieving a balanced budget through increased pledges, Learning Ladders growth, grant funding, modest staffing adjustments, and a planned special gift campaign.

A matching gift opportunity of up to **\$50,000 from an anonymous donor** was announced by Pastor Britt.

Motion: To approve the 2026 operating budget as presented.

Action: Approved.



9. Summer Camp Ministry Report (Paula & Angie)

Plans were shared for **Summer Camp 2026**, including:

- Eight weeks of camp for children in kindergarten through seventh grade
- Leadership development opportunities for older youth through the SALT program
- Introduction of STREAM-based curriculum

A Public Service Grant will support expanded scholarships and program development.

9. Pastoral and Ministry Updates (Pastor Britt Gilmore)

Pastors expressed gratitude for the congregation's generosity and provided updates on:

- Upcoming confirmation classes
- Strong participation in basketball and cheer ministries
- Recent mission work at Branches
- Plans to conduct congregational focus groups for discernment and future planning

An update was also provided regarding Longleaf's continued grant application process and long-term sustainability planning.

10. Other Business

- Council members were asked to maintain discretion regarding details of the upcoming special gift campaign.
 - **2026 Church Council meeting dates** were confirmed:
 - April 28
 - July 28
 - September 29
 - December 1(All meetings scheduled for 6:30 p.m.)
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11. Adjournment